



TRICARE Northwest

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ADFM's Will Soon Join TPR Ranks

Inside this issue:

ADFM's Will Soon Join TPR Ranks	1
New McChord Clinic "Worth the Wait"	2,3
Assistance; Debt Collection "Safety Net" Now	4
Health Promotion to Kick Off the New Year	4

Worth Quoting...

"(TMA Communication and Customer Service)... balances the need to make timely announcements about policy or procedural changes, and the requirement to await the actual implementation (including interpretation) of policies. The delay between the two processes can add to beneficiary confusion, whose desire for precise information is often far ahead of our process for coordinating and implementing guidelines on new programs."

H. James T. Sears, M.D.
Executive Director, TMA

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15, 2000 -- Families of active-duty service members serving in areas far from a military base and its medical facilities will be eligible soon for a new program designed to cut their healthcare costs.

The fiscal 2001 defense authorization act provides for TRICARE Prime Remote for Family Members to begin Oct. 1, 2001. Active duty members in locations more than 50 miles from a military medical treatment facility have had TRICARE Prime Remote since Oct. 1, 1999. Their families, however, are covered under TRICARE Standard.

TRICARE Prime Remote is similar to civilian health maintenance organizations and preferred provider plans. Beneficiaries use participating healthcare providers and pay relatively low co-payments and no deductibles. Under TRICARE Standard, users can choose any provider, but they pay deductibles and higher co-payments.

TRICARE Prime Remote for Family Members will affect the families of roughly 80,000 active duty service members, including recruiters, ROTC instructors and staff, and Training with Industry program participants. The new family member program will offer the same co-payment schedule as TRICARE Prime -- much lower than TRICARE Standard.

Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Robert Styron, regional operations officer for the TRICARE Management Activity here, said the new program responds to families' complaints about being ordered to remote areas where TRICARE Standard is their only military healthcare option. He acknowledged healthcare can be fairly costly using TRICARE Standard.

Families object because their medical care would be free if they were on a base or in a catchment area, Styron said.

TRICARE officials are still ironing out enrollment details, but expect to pub-

licize steps prior to Oct.

1. Styron stressed individuals can make the process easier when the time comes by ensuring their information in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System is current and accurate.

He said the legislation also includes a "waive charges" clause to provide some interim relief until TRICARE Prime Remote for Family Members debuts. Generally, TRICARE plans to waive most cost shares and deductibles incurred by eligible family members between Oct. 30, 2000, and Oct. 30, 2001.

Styron said the clause isn't in effect yet because officials are still working out program details. In the meantime, he advised family members in remote areas to keep all their receipts for co-payments, cost shares and deductibles.

"They may be able to be reimbursed when the details are worked out," he said.

New McChord Clinic “Worth The Wait”



The holiday spirit is in bloom at the new McChord Clinic with decorations festooning the spiral staircase that dominates the entrance area. Appropriate, as the new \$15 Million clinic arrived just in time for Christmas to serve the McChord AFB community.

The 95,000 square foot design adds 40,000 square feet of clinic space. Family Practice is conveniently located just to the right of the entrance and flight medicine to the left. The TRICARE Office is also well situated across from Family Practice. The new facility consolidates the functions previously performed in 13 separate locations.



1LT Jason Lennen dispenses prescriptions from one of the two new pharmacy windows. The new pharmacy doubles the size of the old one. "People have been waiting 20 years for this new clinic," explained 62nd Medical Group Commander Col. Suzanne Hansen, "and according to the people who work there, it is worth the wait."



Capt. Kurt Sandine examines a patient in one of the new exam rooms. In keeping with MTF optimization for managed care, 22 Family Practice Clinic exam rooms were constructed to facilitate better patient flow and other efficiencies.



SSgt. Trina Roulston conducts lab procedures in the clinic's new state-of-the-art laboratory. When she's finished, she may be able to relax in one of the nine break lounges available throughout the clinic. There were no break lounges in the old clinic.



Assistance; Debt Collection "Safety Net" Now in Place

Chris Hober, NWLA

TRICARE now has new points of contact that can help beneficiaries who are unable to resolve their TRICARE issues with the managed care support contractor in a timely fashion. The new positions at each military treatment facility and at the TRICARE Northwest Lead Agency are the Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator (BCAC) and the Debt Collection Officer (DCAO).

When assisting a beneficiary with a TRICARE-related problem, whether it's a TRICARE bill not paid correctly, an appointment problem, enrollment difficulty, or an unsatisfactory experience with a civilian network provider, their first stop toward resolution should normally be the local TRICARE Service Center.

Beneficiaries may stop in to the local TRICARE Service Center for assistance, or contact a beneficiary service

representative by calling (800) 404-2042. This applies to those enrolled in the TRICARE Prime Remote and TRICARE Senior Prime Programs, as well.

Depending on the issue, several toll-free telephone numbers are available at the managed care support contractor's corporate office with which to obtain assistance. For claims, call (800) 404-0110. For enrollment issues, they may call (800) 982-0028. Those needing general TRICARE information should call (800) 982-0032. If the beneficiary has questions about general health topics, or requires on-line nurse assistance for a medical condition, have them call the Health Care Information Line at (800) 750-6946. If they need to update their DEERS address, you may have them contact (800) 538-9552.

Also keep in mind that patients who have complaints or comments about the military treatment facility in which they obtained services should contact that facility's patient representative or patient advocate.

If efforts to resolve issues at the

TRICARE Service Center or the toll-free service lines are unsuccessful, additional help is available from the MTF BCAC or DCAO. The BCAC is their "safety net" who will act on their behalf to coordinate with the Managed Care Support Contractor to get an answer or resolve their issue. If the MTF BCAC cannot resolve the issue satisfactorily, he or she will refer the issue to the regional lead agency BCAC for further assistance.

On rare occasions, military beneficiaries have been taken to collections for unresolved TRICARE claims. Although the Staff Judge Advocates of every service routinely assist military personnel to resolve such situations, you now have another advocate for assistance. The Debt Collection Assistance Officer will intercede on your behalf with collection agencies and assist in resolving the case. When appropriate, the DCAO may work with the MTF or installation Staff Judge Advocate to provide assistance.

The lead agency BCAC and DCAO is Frank Doherty. He can be reached toll-free at (866) 232-7549.

Health Promotion to Kick Off the New Year

Judith Robinson, NHB PAO

Reserve now for the Jan. 19 presentation that will get you off to a healthy New Year. The creative, high impact presentation, includes visual aids showing audiences that lifestyle choices really do make a difference. Sponsored by the Naval Hospital, "Choice and Consequence: The Real Inside Story,"

will be presented by Kathy Ketchum, RN, CRNI, and Becky Engel, RRT, of Providence Medical Center, Seattle. The 60-minute presentations will be held at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30, 2 and 3:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Fleet Support

Building on Naval Station Bremerton. Seating is limited. To reserve or for more information call the Health Promotion Dept. at the Naval Hospital at 475-4997 or e-mail health@pnw.med.navy.mil.